

# REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

## 33<sup>rd</sup> STEERING GROUP MEETING



*Summary, Conclusions and Decisions*

*March 16 and 22, 2021 (Online)*

33<sup>rd</sup> Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) Steering Group (SG) Meeting took place on March 16 and 22, 2021 in the teleconference format, due to continued travel and gathering restrictions brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was organized by the RAI Secretariat via the Zoom platform.

## **Participants**

33<sup>rd</sup> RAI Steering Group Meeting was chaired by the RAI Chairperson, Ms Laura Stefan. It was attended by 9 member countries' representatives:

**Albania** – Ms. Rovena Pregja – Head of the Anticorruption Programs Unit in the Anticorruption Directorate in the Ministry of Justice of Albania;

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** – Mr. Adnan Dlakic - Senior Representative, Expert Adviser, Department for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption, Ministry of Security;

**Bulgaria** – Ms. Dora Zgurovska – Deputy Senior Representative, Head of International Legal Affairs Unit, EU and International Co-operation Directorate, Ministry of Interior;

**Croatia** – Ms. Tamara Miserda, Senior Representative, Head of the Anti-Corruption Sector, Ministry of Justice;

**Moldova** – Mr. Valeriu Cupcea, Deputy Senior Representative, Head of the International Cooperation Directorate, National Anti-corruption Centre;

**Montenegro** – Ms. Marina Micunovic, Senior Representative Head of Unit for International Cooperation, Agency for Prevention of Corruption;

**North Macedonia** – Ms. Elena Dimovska, Deputy Senior Representative, Advisor, Unit for Coordination of the Activities Against Corruption, Ministry of Justice;

**Romania** – Ms. Anca Luminita Stroe, Senior Representative, Legal counsellor, Crime Prevention Department, Ministry of Justice;

**Serbia** – Ms. Bojana Scepanovic, Senior Representative, State Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Ms. Katarina Nikolic, Deputy Senior Representative, Advisor on International Co-operation, Ministry of Justice;

Ms. Laura Stefan, RAI Chairperson.

**RAI Secretariat** was represented by:

Mr. Vladan Joksimovic – Head of Secretariat;

Ms. Aida Zukic – Chief Finance and Operations Officer;

Ms. Dejana Grbic-Velagic – Chief Programme and Communications Officer.

## **Summary of Discussions**

RAI Chairperson, Ms. Laura Stefan, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants joining the Zoom meeting.

### **1. Adoption of Agenda**

The proposed Agenda was adopted unanimously.

### **2. Information from the Secretariat on the past and forthcoming activities**

Head of Secretariat presented the most significant activities since the last SG Meeting and most important prospects for the coming period.

Mr. Joksimovic pointed out the upcoming Signing Ceremony of the International Treaty on Exchange of Data for the Verification of Asset Declarations to take place in Belgrade on March 19 in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, hosted by the Ministry of Justice. Mr. Joksimovic used this opportunity to inform the Steering Group about the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy to participate in G20 process while they are presiding. This would entail RAI's involvement in anti-corruption work-streams during the Italian Presidency. Additionally, the difficulties in regard to the Western Balkans Anti-corruption Roadmap project, jointly implemented with the UNODC were mentioned, with hopes to overcome all the open questions as soon as possible.

Finally, Mr. Joksimovic used this opportunity to thank all the SG Members, former and current Chairperson for their support throughout his mandate. Furthermore, he praised the Secretariat for all the work and efforts and expressed belief that RAI will continue with implementation of ambitious projects in the years to come.

### **3. Presentation of the Financial Report**

Ms. Zukic presented the Financial Report for 2020 highlighting the key elements. Ms. Zukic highlighted the fact that savings made due to COVID19 pandemic outbreak (related to travel and physical event organization restrictions) in 2020 were included in the budget for 2021. Moreover, she mentioned the external Audit Report that was shared with the Steering Group and available on RAI website. It was pointed out that the audit process was successful and all expenditures were in line with RAI internal rules, and the international accounting best practices and ISO standards for accounting.

Moreover, Ms. Zukic briefly presented utilization of funds from other sources (projects-related funding), highlighting the fact that RAI Secretariat has managed to have a variety of donors in 2020 and that this practice will be continued in the future as well.

Narrative Financial Report was also shared with the SG members. The Steering Group took note of the Financial Report for 2020.

#### 4. Selection process for the Head of Secretariat

The Chairperson and Chief Finance and Operations Officer presented the process of interviewing and evaluation of the candidates for the position of the Head of Secretariat.

Secretariat presented the list of potential questions for interviews with candidates. Interview questions were approved by the Steering Group, following an online voting on proposed questions.

Chairperson addressed interview questions with candidates, while the Steering Group members evaluated all interviewed candidates using an evaluation form, prior sent by the Secretariat. All interviews followed the same procedure, including core questions and timing, to ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to present themselves. Additionally, Steering Group members had an opportunity to ask up to two follow up questions per candidate, addressed by the Chairperson.

After the evaluation process was finalised, it was discovered that the Steering Group members were using several scoring systems evaluating the interviewed candidates. Having this in mind, it was proposed and agreed to meet on Monday, 22 March, to further discuss the challenges occurred during the process.

Following the detailed discussion, the qualified majority of Steering Group members decided to annul the selection procedure for the Head of Secretariat position due to the difficulties posed by conducting the entire selection process in an online format. Following the adoption of the meeting's *Summary, Conclusions and Decisions*, the position shall be reopened.

#### 5. Any Other Business

Head of Secretariat presented the proposed amendments to the Office Policies Manual, related to Severance Pay to core staff members. Following the comments made by the SG members, the proposed amendments were adopted by consensus (See Annex 1).

Steering Group members used this opportunity to thank Mr. Joksimovic for his performance and enthusiasm during the entire mandate.

### ***Conclusions and Decisions***

1. Steering Group took note of the Financial Report for 2020;

2. Steering Group decided to annul the selection procedure for the Head of Secretariat position and reopen the new vacancy;
3. Steering Group amended the Office Policies Manual, 1. Article 8.3.4. Severance Pay for Core staff Members.

## Annex 1 - Amendments to RAI's internal documents

### Office Policies Manual

#### **1. Article 8.3.4. Severance Pay for Core staff Members shall be amended as follows:**

*“Unless the Contract is terminated by the employee in accordance with 8.3.1 or due to violations of the obligations arising from employment or non-compliance with obligations under the Contract by a staff member, severance pay shall be established in an amount of one third of the average monthly salary paid to the staff member in the last three consecutive months prior to the termination of the Contract for each year of employment with the Secretariat.”*